Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property	Information	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #:
Property Name(s):	"Poladian Building" or "Del Ray Recreation Center," "Del Ray Apartments," and "Del Ray Restaurant"	
Property Date(s):	1939, 1947	Open to Public? ☐Yes ☒ Limited ☐No
Property Address:	2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue City:	Alexandria Zip: 22301
County or Ind. City:	Ind. City of Alexandria USGS Quad(s):	Alexandria, VA-DC-MD
Physical Character of General Surroundings		
Acreage: 1.0318 Setting (choose one): Urban Town Village Suburban Rural Transportation Corridor		
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: The building is situated on level ground within a 44,943 square-foot lot ⁱ on the southeast corner of E. Uhler and Mt. Vernon avenues. The building abuts its property line and its principle façade contributes to the commercial character of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the main thoroughfare of an 1894 subdivision which was incorporated as the Town of Potomac in 1908 and annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929. Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property:		
Ownership Category:	☐ Public-Local ☐ Public-Se	tate Public-Federal
Individual Resource Information		
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc		
Mixed-use: commercial, office, and residential		
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) Mixed-use: commercial and residential		
Architectural style or elements of styles: Art Deco		
Architect, builder, or original owner: Jacob H. Poladian		
# of stories 2 Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Poor Ruins Rebuilt Renovated		
Are there any known threats to this property? None known		

Resource Component Information

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer "n/a." If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

Foundation: Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete. Poured concrete, brick and cinder block

Structure: Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known. **Brick (6:1 common bond)**

Walls: Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles.

Painted brick and cinder block

Windows: Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced? Large storefront windows on ground floor; metal-frame, double- and triple-casements above.

Porch: Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details. N/A

Roof: Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material.

Flat parapet, composite and slag

Chimney(s): List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible.

Two interior chimney stacks near façade

Architectural Description of Individual Resource: (Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated.)

This Art Deco-style commercial structure, the "Poladian Building" at **2411-2413-2415-2417-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue**, dates to 1947 and was designed by engineer Jacob H. Poladian. The present structure is a reconstruction of an earlier Art Deco building (constructed by Poladian in 1939) which burnt in "one of the worst fires in the history of Alexandria" in December 1945. iii

Nearly square in plan, the structure's gross building area is 30,007 square feet and contains four commercial spaces on the first floor and 17 apartments on the second. The two-story edifice is divided vertically into four double-bays flanking a one-and-a-half central bay. The central pavilion slightly projects beyond the face of the building and is further differentiated by a stepped parapet roof and flanking pilasters. It contains the main entrance, which is recessed and shaded by a modern glass-and-steel awning. Excepting the central pavilion, each individual bay is demarcated by ten brick pilasters that march across the façade and rise above the roofline, finishing in a decorative, stepped sunburst pattern. The pilasters alternate from full-height to truncated, as the latter would bisect the four double bays which are spanned by large storefront windows. The arrangement is not completely symmetrical, as the most northern retail space (2419) spans three bays, while its neighbor (2417) spans only one-and-a-half bay with its entrance on the projecting central pavilion. Metal-frame, plate glass storefront windows flank three centralized, street-level entrances to ground-floor commercial spaces. The second story is fenestrated with double- and triple-casements in metal frames with concrete sills. The brick exterior is painted ecru with brown trim.

This spatial organization resembles a drawing created by Poladian circa 1938, which closely mimics the front elevation he drafted for the neighboring Del Ray Building, sited in the northeastern corner of E. Uhler and Mt. Vernon avenues. [Figure 1] It could be surmised that this front elevation -- which exhibits four storefronts, yet only six full-height pilasters and a half-bay central pavilion -- may have been the

ideal for the Poladian Building, which has broader frontage on Mt. Vernon Avenue compared to its neighbor across Uhler Avenue. Without period photographs, it is difficult to ascertain whether this really is what the 1939 building looked like before the 1945 fire and subsequent rebuilding.

The 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia depicts a rectangular block, the longer side facing Mt. Vernon Avenue, with internal partitions forming two large stores that flank two small, central vestibules. [Figure 2] Presumably, these hold the stairs that lead to the second-floor apartments (2415). Two narrow spaces extend from the vestibules towards the rear, one of which (2417) is labeled 'restaurant.' At the rear of the most northern bay (2419) stretches a one-story hyphen connecting the main block to a rectangular two-story block (205 East Uhler Avenue), the longer side of which parallels the rear of the main block (from which it is separated by an L-shaped alley which feeds out onto Mt. Vernon Avenue, along the main block's southern elevation). The building's construction materials are listed as brick-faced cinder block with steel posts and beams.

Destroyed by fire in 1945, the edifice was rebuilt at the expense of \$82,000 in 1947. The City of Alexandria's Department of Real Estate Assessment of the structure in 1947 recorded that the building had a full, cement basement and that the floors comprised steel, concrete, and sub-floor atop wood joists. Flooring throughout was hardwood, while the interior was finished with plaster walls, woodboard, and softwood trim and contained steel stairs. The 8 January 1957 real estate assessment records note that the building was remodeled in 1955, and an alteration permit from 19 August 1955 corroborates that a builder "made 11 apartments" in 2415 Mt. Vernon Avenue. The 1957 assessment shows a slight depreciation in the building's value between 1954 and 1957, with the note "depreciation due to poor workmanship." By the time the 1958 Sanborn was published, the rear alley was partially filled in, creating a nearly square footprint. Furniture retailers occupied all three stores in the front and rear. [Figure 3] Further renovations were made throughout the 1960s and 1970s, including remodeling the restaurant, altering office space, reroofing, and enclosing a stairway and installing a trap door.

The structure is five bays deep. The rear and northern elevations are punctuated with asymmetrical fenestration on the second floor and a few metal side doors. A large rectangular void intersects the second floor on the rear façade, so that an aerial view of the roof presents a U-shaped plan. The southern elevation is demarcated by five, full-height pilasters and contains an entrance in the rear bay. The second floor has alternating double and single casement windows in metal frames, while the ground floor is punctuated with horizontal, glass-block fenestration. A colorful mural, painted stylistically to recall those from the WPA-era, depicts an idealized scene of "Historic Del Ray," with the Washington skyline in the background and an electric train and a steeplechase equestrian in the foreground.

The building retains much of its original form and Art Deco character, and is in good condition.



Figure 1: Front elevation, probably for 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue, by J.H. Poladian circa 1938.

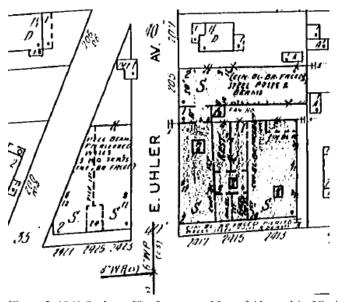


Figure 2: 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, Sheet 45, depicting plan of 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue

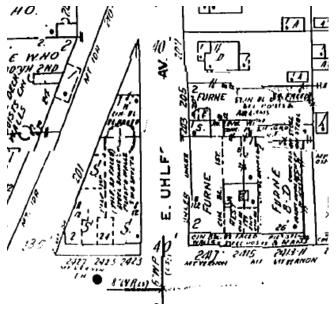


Figure 3: 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, Sheet 45, depicting plan of 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Normally, only information contained on this form will be posted for consideration by the State Review Board.

The site of the Poladian Building is a rectangular parcel originally platted as lots 1109-1114 in the first Del Ray subdivision, a streetcar suburb created in 1894 by Charles E. Wood and William Harmon, developers from Ohio. In 1908, this rural community was incorporated as the Town of Potomac within the Jefferson Magisterial District in Alexandria County (renamed Arlington County in 1920), then annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929. The Poladian Building lies within the boundaries of the Town of Potomac Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992, yet is not considered a contributing resource to the district. The Poladian Building lies within the boundaries of the Considered a contributing resource to the district.

Surveyed by D.J. Howell in March 1894, Del Ray was platted in a grid pattern, with 1160 lots (averaging 25-feet by 105-feet) laid out between Bellefonte Avenue at the southern end and Mount Ida Avenue at the northern extreme. Development began in the south, closer to Alexandria, and extended northward slowly: by 1905, only 720 lots had been sold and very few of those had been developed. The 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia shows the northern half of the block bounded by Carroll (present-day Uhler), Oxford, Mt. Ida, and Mt. Vernon avenues virtually empty, with only a 1-1/2-story dwelling and two one-story ancillary structures in the rear of lots 115-116 (207 East Uhler Street). While the block was mostly filled by the time the 1931 Sanborn was published, the sizable parcel at the southeastern corner of Carroll and Mt. Vernon avenues remained undeveloped.

In 1937, H. Diradoor aggregated Lot 1112 from Leo P. Harlow and Lots 1109-1111 from Laura V. Smith and sold them to prominent house builder Jacob H. Poladian.xiv Poladian paid \$50 to move a 208-square foot, L-shaped, frame commercial structure with a pitched roof from the northwest corner of Howell and Mt. Vernon avenues to the northeast [sic] corner of Euhler Street [sic] and Mt. Vernon avenues in late July 1938.xv Nearly one year later, Poladian purchased lots 1113 and 1114xvi and subsequently applied for a new construction permit for lots 1109-1114, on which he planned to erect a flat-roofed commercial building constructed of brick and cinder block with brick veneer, which would hold 12 apartments and a store.xvii Del Ray businessman Norman Hatch, President of Photo Press International Ltd., had his first office at 2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Hatch attested that "Prior to World War II there were offices on the second floor, stores on the first floor, and a bowling alley in the basement. When I was there, the upstairs consisted of 30 to 40 efficiency apartments because of World War II.

During the war, this building served as the Del Ray Recreation Center, the Del Ray Apartments, and the Del Ray Restaurant. A lifelong resident of Del Ray, Robert "Bob" Fischman, recalled that there was a bowling alley in the basement of the Del Ray Recreation Center: "It was underground. But it's no longer there. It was on Uhler Avenue, and right next to where Barnes and Kimmel [sic] [furniture store]^{xix} was. And it was underground. And Palladian [sic], Harry Palladian's [sic] father, built it."^{xx} Del Ray resident Ralph Grimm also remembered the bowling alley in the basement with a restaurant over it on the ground floor (as well as a beauty shop, a furniture store, and second-floor apartments) at the Mt. Vernon Avenue location circa 1941, which "burned up... in a big fire... [that] burned all day long."^{xxi} On Christmas eve of 1945, the lacquer used on the bowling lanes caught fire and the building burned down; the fire was considered the worst the Alexandria fire department had yet faced, burning "all of the businesses located on the east side of the 2400 block of Mount Vernon Avenue [and] leaving thirteen families homeless."^{xxii}

Of Armenian descent, Jacob Harry Poladian (1891-1964) -- the building's designer and builder -- was born in Aintab, Turkey, the son of a builder. At the age of 17, in 1908, he immigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, eventually settling in Troy, New York, to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, wherefrom he earned a civil engineering degree in 1918. His studies were interrupted by World War I, during which he enlisted in the Army and was deployed to France. Upon returning from war, having gained his United States citizenship, he settled in New Jersey, where he met his wife, Edna, whom he

married in 1925. After working as a builder in New York City, he moved to Alexandria in 1935 where he engaged in building private residences. In the 1940 United States federal census, he resided at 2421 Taylor Avenue in Alexandria with his wife, his son J. Harry, Jr. and daughter S. Isabel. With his four brothers who had emigrated from Turkey, Poladian established the Poladian Construction Company in June 1936. In Alexandria City directories between 1936 and 1942, his occupation was given as a builder, and his office was listed as located on Mount Vernon Avenue. Over the next 24 years, Poladian would develop and manage numerous buildings in Alexandria.

Poladian arrived in Alexandria at an auspicious time. Unlike other regions, the Washington area was buttressed to a degree from the precipitous economic downturn, as the federal "government grew ... during the Depression and World War II, and the demand for housing remained high as new jobs were created to serve the needs of the growing federal presence." Del Ray's location between the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad (1855-1968) and the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Electric Railway (1890-1930), as well as its proximity to U.S. Route 1, ensured it would thrive as a bedroom community for federal workers. Having been annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929, new attention was turned towards Del Ray and to the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor, in particular, which was thought of as a secondary commercial thoroughfare to Alexandria's King Street. Between 1938 and 1939, 51 new construction permits were issued for the area, including two to Poladian, who built another Art Deco building on the opposite side of E. Uhler Avenue from the Poladian Building in 1938.

In 1955, Lusk's Northern Virginia Real Estate Directory published information on 2415 Mt. Vernon Avenue, then owned by the Poladian Construction Corporation: the square footage was ascertained at 16,905, the land worth \$14,369, and the total assessed value with improvements was \$69,054. **xxviii* In 1984, the Poladian Construction Corporation filed a Deed of Consolidation, forming Lot 600 out of lots 1109-1116, which contained 44,943 square feet and fronted 40-feet on E. Uhler and Oxford avenues and 60-feet on Mt. Vernon Avenue. **xxix* The Poladian Construction Corporation retained ownership of the property until divesting it to Mount Vernon Avenue LLC in 2002. This entity transferred ownership to Mount Vernon Properties of Delaware LLC, the current owner, in 2005. **xxx**

The Poladian Building is significant for its architecture, as an excellent application of the elements of the Art Deco style, which derived from the 1925 Parisian *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*. Taken in its context, the building is also significant as an intact element in a larger commercial fabric that speaks to Del Ray's rise in the 1930s and 1940s. The building reflects the growing importance of Mt. Vernon Avenue as a commercial thoroughfare and exhibits the theme of trade: between 1940 and the present, the building has housed a number of neighborhood merchants, including the Ford Furniture Company, Barnes and Kimel Furniture Company, the Del Ray Furniture Exchange, and R&R Venetian Blinds, among other retail outlets, offices, and restaurants, including a drive-in dairy counter. The upper floor of the building held Poladian's own office until he relocated to Glebe House in the 1950s. Presently, it holds three neighborhood eateries and a yoga studio as well as apartments. The evolution of the building's usage from office/retail to residential/retail also reflects Washington's growth in the years leading up to World War II and to local housing shortages in wartime.

Thus, the building is significant on the local and state levels as characteristic of vernacular Art Deco style (criterion C); for its association with local personages of significance (criterion B); and its role in the development of Del Ray as an urban enclave (criterion A) concurrent with Northern Virginia's growing regional importance in the interwar years and the country's transformation from a predominantly rural to an urban character. It retains integrity in its setting, location, design, materials, and feeling.

1. 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Façade (west elevation), oblique angle, facing NE (47°). Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



2. 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Façade (west elevation), detail central pavilion, straight angle, facing E (91°). Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



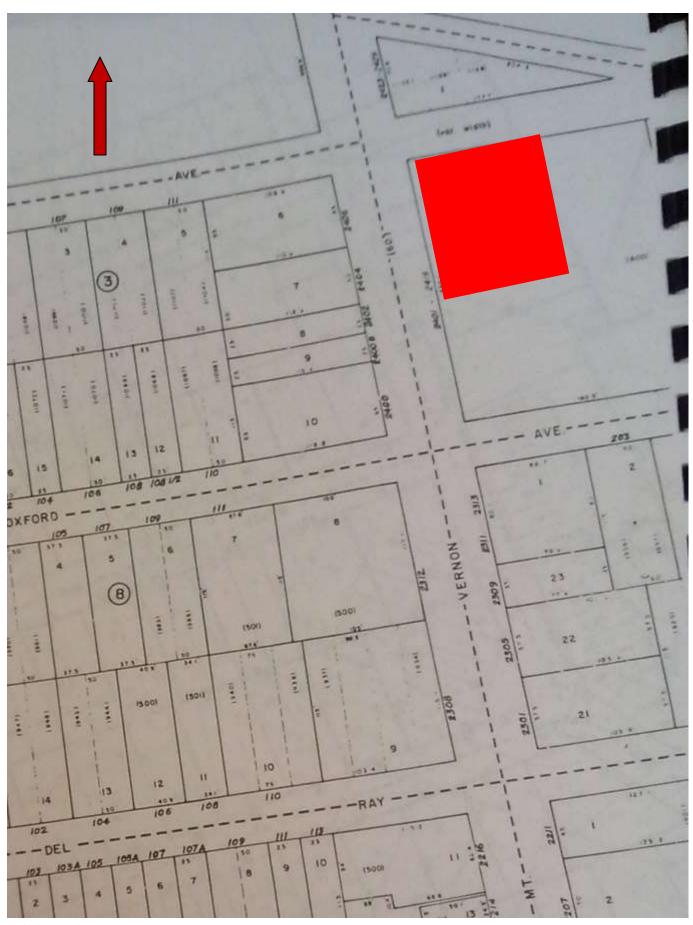
3. 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Rear elevation, oblique angle, facing SW (203⁰). Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



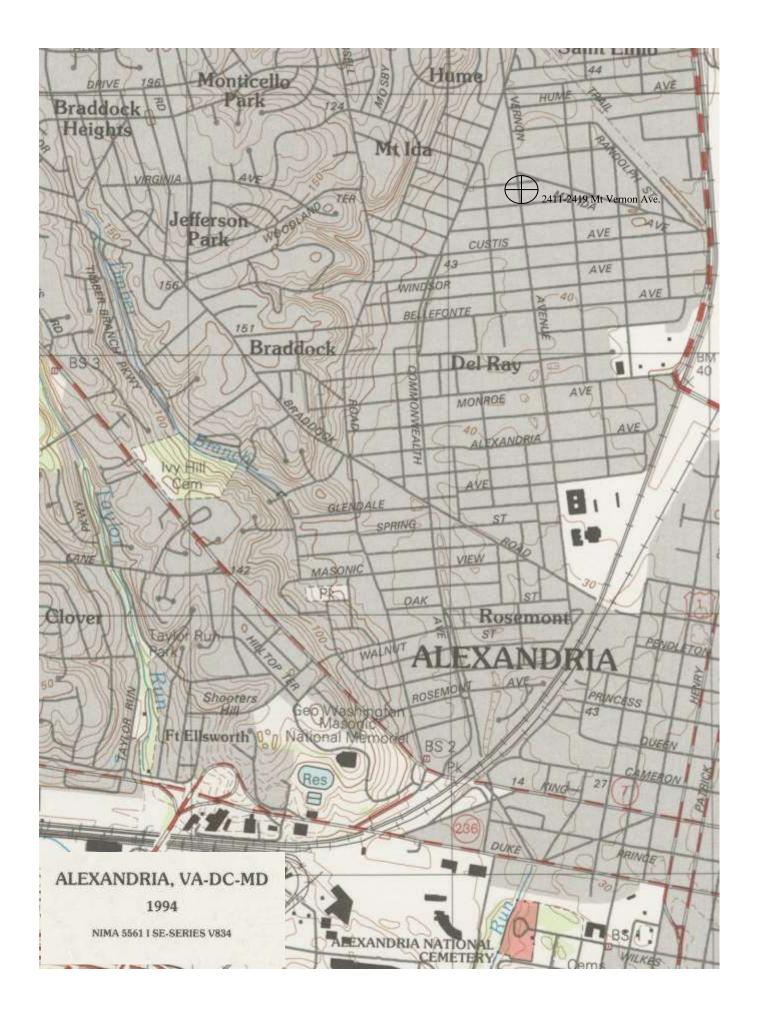
4. 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue. North elevation, oblique angle, facing SE. Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



5. 2411-2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue. South elevation, oblique angle, facing NE. Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014



Building outline not to scale. 2014.



https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/history/OHAOralHistoryGrimmRalph.pdf xxii Escherich, section 8: page 56.

xxiii "Jacob N. Poladian, 73, Engineer, Home Builder" obit. in *The Washington Post* 3 June 1964: City Section, B9. One of Poladian's houses in Del Ray is a frame Tudor Revival (1935) 108 E. Bellefonte Avenue which is a contributing resource to the Town of Potomac Historic District. From, Escherich, section 7: page 10.

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ⁱ City of Alexandria Real Estate Assessment database, Account No. 50441000, Assessment Map 034.02-04-02. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.

ⁱⁱ This name associated with the address 2413-2417 Mt. Vernon Avenue first appears in Alteration/repair permit #7358 from 1 April 1947. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center. It was alternately known as the "Del Ray Recreation Center," "Del Ray Apartments," and "Del Ray Restaurant" circa 1945. See Susan Esherich, Town of Potomac Historic District, National Register of Historic Places, 1992, section 8: page 55.

iii Escherich, section 7: page 6.

iv City of Alexandria Real Estate Assessment database, Account No. 50441000, Assessment Map 034.02-04-02. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records. Also see "Building Valuation for 2415 Mt. Vernon Ave.", 8 January 1957, City of Alexandria Department of Real Estate Assessment.

^v Alteration/repair permit #7358 from 1 April 1947 for 2413-2417 Mt. Vernon Avenue: repair fire damage, \$82,000. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

vi "Building Valuation for 2415 Mt. Vernon Ave.", 1 December 1947, City of Alexandria Department of Real Estate Assessment.

vii Alteration/repair permit #12252 from 19 August 1955 for 2415 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

viii "Building Valuation for 2415 Mt. Vernon Ave.", 8 January 1957, City of Alexandria Department of Real Estate Assessment. ix See Alteration/repair permits for 2413-2419 Mt Vernon Avenue, including #32186 from 12 January1976: reroof; #23413 from 22 September 1966: alter wall board paneling, install two doors, close stairway and install trap door; #24777 from 16 October 1967: panel banquet room of restaurant; #30536 from 25 January 1974: remove section of wall and add to bar at restaurant; and #34959 from 5 December 1978: alter offices, etc. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

* Escherich, page 2.

xi This may be explained by the fact that when the NRHP nomination was compiled in 1992, the building (dating circa 1945) was not yet 50 years old and therefore considered ineligible for consideration.

xii See Arlington County Deed Book O No. 4, page 442

xiii Escherich, section 8: page 39, 41.

xiv City of Alexandria Deed Book 137, page 99, 25 June 1937: Leo P. Harlow, Grantor to H. Diradoor, Grantee. City of Alexandria Deed Book 138, page 202, 11 August 1937: Laura V. Smith, Grantor to H. Diradoor, Grantee; for derivation of title, see Arlington County Deed Book 179, page 64, from 30 November 1921. City of Alexandria Deed Book 151, page 169, 17 November 1937: H. Diradoor, widow, Grantor to Jacob H. Poladian, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records. See also City of Alexandria Department of Real Estate Assessment for 2415 Mt. Vernon Ave., 1 December 1947. xv Alteration/repair permit #2700 from 26 July 1938 for 2413-2417 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

xvi City of Alexandria Deed Book 152, page 59, from 15 April 1939: Robert E. and Rena A. Schofield, Grantors to Jacob H. Poladian, Grantee, Lots 1113-1114. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.

xvii New construction permit #2132 from 6 July 1939, for Lots 1109-1114 Mt Vernon and Uhler. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

xviii Norman Hatch, "Interview with Norman Hatch," 20 March 2008. Conducted and transcribed by Dave Mills in Mr. Hatch's Home on Mount Ida Avenue in Alexandria, Virginia for *Alexandria Legacies- Del Ray/Potomac Centennial*, the City of Alexandria's Office of Historic Alexandria's Oral History Program, page 6. Accessed 3 May 2014 at https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/history/OHAOralHistoryHatch.pdf

xix According to the 1947 City of Alexandria Directory, the Barnes and Kimel Furniture Company store was located at 2419 Mt. Vernon Avenue.

xx Robert Fischman, "Interview with Robert and Antoinette Fischman," 1 November 2005. Conducted and transcribed by Barbara Murray in the Fischman's home in Alexandria, Virginia, for *Alexandria Legacies*, the City of Alexandria's Office of Historic Alexandria's Oral History Program, page 55. Accessed 3 May 2014 at

https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/history/OHAOralHistoryFischman.pdf

xxi Ralph Grimm, "Interview with Ralph Grimm," 23 November 2005. Conducted and transcribed by Anna Gardner in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia, for *Alexandria Legacies*, the City of Alexandria's Office of Historic Alexandria's Oral History Program, page 6. Accessed 3 May 2014 at

xxiv He lived in that house at the time of his death, 24 years later. See "Jacob N. Poladian, 73, Engineer, Home Builder"

xxv Biographical information on Jacob H. Poladian provided by granddaughter Joann F. Poladian, 111 Lake Cook Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22304.

xxvi United States Federal Population census, 1940.

xxvii Escherich, section 8: page 51.

xxviii Lusk's Northern Virginia Real Estate Directory, 1955. Repository: Special Collections, Barrett Branch, Alexandria Public Library.

xxix City of Alexandria Deed Book 1136, page 613, from 2 November 1984: Poladian Construction Corporation, Deed of Consolidation. For derivation of titles, see City of Alexandria Deed Book 159, page 330, from 31 January 1940, and City of Alexandria Deed Book 1019, page 170, from 21 April 1981. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.

xxx City of Alexandria Instrument No. 20011494 from 9 April 2002: Poladian Construction Corporation, Grantor to Mount Vernon Avenue LLC, Grantee. City of Alexandria Instrument No. 50013435 from 20 April 2005: Mount Vernon Avenue LLC, Grantor to Mount Vernon Properties of Delaware LLC. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.

xxxi Alexandria City Directories, 1940-1980. Repository: Special Collections, Barrett Branch, Alexandria Public Library. See also Certificate of Occupancy #1 for 2415 Mt. Vernon Avenue, 1952-1953: William Pounder applied to occupy one building at that address as a "drive-in store selling dairy products." City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.